

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) secured \$1.6 million in congressionally-directed funding for the New York National Guard to purchase forward looking infrared systems to enhance the search and rescue capabilities of its Blackhawk Helicopters. These funds were included in a Fiscal Year 2009 funding bill, which passed the House of Representatives yesterday.

“Infrared systems on Blackhawk Helicopters will greatly enhance the Guard’s search and rescue and homeland security missions by allowing rescuers see at night and during stormy conditions.” **Arcuri said.** “I am proud to bring taxpayer dollars back home to provide the brave men and women of our National Guard with the best technology to keep us safe.”

The funds secured by Arcuri are included in The Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009 (H.R. 2638), which passed the House of Representatives yesterday by a bipartisan majority of 370 to 58.

This funding will enable the New York National Guard to purchase an additional five STAR II forward looking infrared systems, which will be used on the UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopters. On many occasions, the STAR II system has been the difference between life and death for wounded or injured patients due to the limitations of Night Vision Goggles or environmental conditions. New York National Guard Blackhawk Helicopters play an integral role in supporting state emergency response missions, including search and rescue, homeland security missions, and Medevac. The STAR II forward looking infrared systems will allow the aircraft to operate in adverse weather conditions in the day and night. Forward looking infrared systems would allow for life saving flights that may not have been possible with just Night Vision Goggles.

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